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PRESS RELEASE

BANGLADESH “GRADUATES” FROM DIVERSITY VISA PROGRAM

Dhaka, September 20, 2011— As of September 30, 2012, citizens of Bangladesh are no longer eligible to participate in the Diversity Immigrant Visa (DV) program. The Diversity Visa lottery program is a U.S. Congress-mandated program to increase the numbers of immigrants from countries with historically low numbers of legal migration to the United States. Because Bangladesh no longer fits that definition, 2012 will be the last year that the Diversity Visa program is available to Bangladeshis. This puts Bangladesh at an equal level with other countries with high levels of immigration such as China, India, Mexico, and the United Kingdom.

Over the past five years, Bangladesh has sent more than 50,000 new permanent resident visa holders to the United States. The law stipulates that the Diversity Visa program is only available to countries that issue less than 50,000 immigrant visas over a period of five years. The United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) has determined that Bangladesh has exceeded this limit and therefore will not be eligible for the 2013 lottery cycle. This is good news—it demonstrates that the Diversity Visa program has achieved its goal of welcoming more Bangladeshi citizens into the United States as legal immigrants. In fact, the number of people living in the United States who claim Bangladesh as their country of origin is now estimated at over 500,000.

Because Bangladesh is “graduating” from the Diversity Visa program, Bangladeshis should NOT attempt to enroll in the 2013 Diversity Visa program during the October to November 2011 enrollment period. Applicants who attempt to enter the program during this period by using a false country of residence will have their applications invalidated and will forfeit any application fees they pay should they appear for an interview.

Winners of Diversity Visa 2012 are NOT affected by this announcement. Those who applied October to November 2010 can check their status online at www.dvlottery.state.gov between June 2011 and June 2012. If selected to appear for an interview, winners should

proceed with processing their cases and they will be scheduled for an interview between October 2011 and September 2012.

Be wary of potential fraud related to the Diversity Visa program. Individuals may approach you in person or send you emails claiming you have won a Diversity Visa. Be wary of these individuals or email messages. The only way to know if you have won the Diversity Visa lottery is to visit www.dvlottery.state.gov and check your confirmation number using the Entry Status Check.

Immigrant visas applicants on family-based or employment-based petitions are not affected by this announcement. These applications will continue to be processed and interviews scheduled as priority dates between current. United States citizens or permanent residents interested in petitioning for family members to join them in the United States should visit www.uscis.gov for more information.

Non-immigrant (or temporary visitor) visa applicants such as students, business travelers, and tourists are not affected by this announcement. There is no limit to the number of qualified non-immigrant visa applicants that can receive these types of visas. For more information on non-immigrant visas, visit http://dhaka.usembassy.gov/non-immigrant_visas.html.

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Note: A Bangla translation of this press release is also available at the American Center. If you are interested in the translation, please call the American Center Press Section, Tel: 8837150-4, Fax: 9885688; e-mail: DhakaPA@state.gov; Website: [http:// dhaka.usembassy.gov](http://dhaka.usembassy.gov)